

**PROBLEMS OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
IN THE
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

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PURPOSE OF PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to list some of the special personnel management problems, which, to a great extent, are unique to CIA. Most of these problems are created by the Agency's basic requirement for security. No attempt is made to discuss present or proposed means of solving these special problems.

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SECURITY CLEARANCES

The requirement of special security clearances for all personnel employed by CIA causes major recruitment problems. All recruiting must be done from at least four to six months before selected applicants can be assigned to any duties in the Agency in order to provide time to obtain security clearances. This additional time added to the normal lead time for processing, training and development activities requires the Agency to anticipate its special as well as normal requirements far in advance of its needs. Also, the time required for security investigation gives CIA a decided disadvantage in competitive recruitment, particularly in time of full employment. We lose to industry and to other Government agencies many good prospects who want to go to work immediately after graduation from school. Others demand a firm commitment for employment when the job is offered.

PUBLICITY IN RECRUITMENT

If persons employed by the Agency are to have maximum usefulness, it is necessary that they be recruited with minimum publicity. Recruiters are severely limited in what information they can divulge about the Agency's organization and operations, and in many instances it may be said that the recruiter recruits in the dark" because information about certain operations cannot be divulged to those who participate in contacting and interviewing candidates.

DIVERSE GROUPS OF PERSONNEL

The complexity and nature of the mission of CIA creates special personnel requirements which cause problems in the development and effective utilization of a work force. Because of the varied nature of our personnel requirements and the need for our personnel overseas to work under cover arrangements we have various categories of personnel having different legal relationships, privileges, obligations and working conditions. The procurement, training and development of such diverse groups present problems of administrative control and personnel management.

SPECIAL PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the personnel requirements dictated by the career concept, CIA has the unique problem of acquiring and maintaining sizeable groups of individuals who have highly specialized skills or knowledge in unusual fields of endeavor. The difficulty of maintaining pin-point expertise, which may be used for a "one-shot" operation or may never be used if the need does not materialize, creates a constant dilemma. A good example of this is the need for persons to acquire expert language and area knowledge of the many little known though periodically important areas. Even if the knowledge of such areas should never be required it must still be kept usable on a minute's notice in the event the political wind blows in the direction of that respective area.

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TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Special training in intelligence work is not confined to the specialists and the activists but must also be provided in varying degrees to those persons who support the substantive effort administratively, to those who participate in under-cover operations, and in some cases even to those who work at rudimentary tasks. This is costly in terms of time, manpower and money.

COMPARTMENTATION

Compartmentation, which is necessary in our organizational structure in order to conduct our clandestine activities on the need-to-know basis, affects individuals in various ways. The overt employee interested in a career in covert operations finds it difficult to estimate his prospects or plans for the future because of his inability to know what goes on in the clandestine side of the organization. The covert employee may become overly engrossed in the mechanics of clandestine operations and lose sight of the overall objective of the Agency. The bright young man loses his enthusiasm when his suggestions and ideas, which are already in use but not generally known for security reasons, are gingerly shelved.

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ADMINISTRATIVE "RED TAPE"

The rapid growth of the Agency and the increasing complexity of our mission has resulted in an excessive number of administrative regulations and procedures. Many individuals who have been independent operators heretofore feel that the Agency is addressing itself to administrative functions rather than operations, and find it impossible to perform in what they consider a bureaucratic setting.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR A YOUNG WORK FORCE

The problems of personnel morale, found in all Government agencies, are aggravated in CIA by the special need for a young work force. Keeping a youthful work force and still abiding by Government regulations and practices under our democratic American system causes much frustration for the Agency group which is responsible for clandestine activities. Older employees, keenly interested in job security, wish to remain in the Agency until they are eligible to receive retirement benefits. Attrition of younger career personnel in the middle and upper grade levels increases when these individuals realize that their chance of advancement to higher grades is diminished by the fact that these positions are now filled by able men who will remain in the Agency for many years before retiring. Among these are the "hangers-on" who are extremely difficult to identify and then to separate when identified. Individuals who are doers in the Agency often feel stymied and resent, and often rightfully so, the tendency of persons in control placing job security above getting the job done.

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DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Agency, like other organizations, always faces the unsolved problem of conferring responsibility downward to the extent necessary to provide independence and challenge to the able young man. This problem of insufficient decentralization of authority causes a fairly large number of highly qualified employees to become dissatisfied with their personal progress and feel there is a lack of challenge in their work. They conclude that work in industry or private institutions will satisfy their work needs as well as their social and community needs and aspirations.

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ANONYMITY

The fact that persons working in CIA must remain anonymous and not receive public, or in many cases even family, recognition is an underlying psychological cause of many of our personnel morale problems. Persons at all levels want recognition and need the satisfaction of being important in the eyes of their families, relatives, friends, associates and the public. In an intelligence agency this is not possible especially at the working level. In general, it is true that in CIA the more the individual achieves the less he can talk about it. Social and family pressures, particularly on people who have no plausible story to tell, are known to be the cause of much personal frustration and tension, particularly true in the younger employees and in specialists who are trained and devoted to academic and scientific pursuits.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PERIPHERY

While all large and complex organizations have the problem of communicating up and down the line and laterally, our problem of communication to the periphery is aggravated by security factors. Our restrictions in communicating to persons outside and inside the Agency causes special problems of personnel morale as well as unusual difficulties in recruiting employees.

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LONG-TIME DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER OFFICERS

The present terrific pressures for current intelligence makes the long-time development of many of our potential career officers impossible. The increasing need for -on-the-spot observers and agent handlers does not allow time to put these individuals through the step-by-step journeyman stages. Young men who become activists without any experience or training as generalists have little future in the Agency after they reach the age of 45, when for numerous reasons such as health, family responsibilities, etc., many individuals are no longer able to perform overseas.

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WORK FRUSTRATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL SPECIALISTS

Professional specialists in CIA are subject to certain work pressures which are not generally characteristic of academic and research organizations. An intelligence activity is geared to a very quick pace and must be flexible enough to meet constantly arising changes and emergencies. The Agency must always be aware of deadlines even though this may occasionally involve a sacrifice in completeness and thoroughness. For these reasons many persons are working in a constant atmosphere of deadlines, priorities, apprehensions of having missed significant data, and other psychological factors.

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SPECIAL TRAINING AND UTILIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL SPECIALISTS

It is recognized that the professional specialists who can apply their talents to the intelligence profession are a crucial part of an intelligence organization. The application of talents to the various phases of foreign situations means that languages and area knowledge is a requirement of the highest order. Training functional experts in language and area knowledge and also in the specialty of intelligence techniques takes time and is very costly. Furthermore moulding professional specialists into a vigorous producing unit creates manpower utilization problems as well as problems of personnel morale. The Agency must assure these specialists academic freedom of inquiry and still demand conformity to the policies and procedures of the Agency's security system. Determining how to accomplish effective utilization of manpower and still keep up the morale of the specialist who must maintain a valuable but unused skill and at the same time direct his activities in other fields is a problem of major proportions.

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TRAINING WITHIN THE AGENCY

CIA has a unique problem of having to provide professional intelligence training within the Agency since the doctrine, methods and techniques of exploiting sources of intelligence information are closely guarded secrets. This type of training does not exist any place except within CIA and cannot be done externally or be acquired prior to entrance on duty.

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LOSS OF COVER

A significant facet of the problem of manpower utilization arises when career officers who have specialized in particular functions or geographical areas or unusual languages lose cover and can no longer operate in a covert capacity.

PAPER WORK AND COORDINATION

The enormous amount of paper work and seemingly unnecessary amount of staff review complicate getting the job done. The Agency is also plagued to an inordinate extent with the drawbacks associated with coordinated papers and group research. The time and effort required to complete a job discourages initiative and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, some individuals consider that the end result does not justify the means and often are willing to accept policies or operations which are basically repugnant to them and thus find themselves compromising their standards and their convictions.